Financial irregularities in Nandankanan Zoo

†1423. DR. D. MASTHAN:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received certain reports regarding financial irregularities in Nandankanan Zoo;

(b) if so, what are the details of such reports, alongwith the names of persons by whom such reports have been submitted;

(c) whether Government have taken decision to initiate enquiry in respect of these irregularities; and

(d) if so, the name of the agency which has been appointed to conduct enquiry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (d) Report on certain financial irrgularities by Shri B.C. Prusty, Ex-Director, Nandankanan Zoo was received by the Orissa Government. Orissa Government has entrusted the enquiry to an officer of the level of Additional Secretary in the Government of Orissa.

National River Protection Plan in Madhya Pradesh towns

†1424. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made in respect of the plan formulated under the National River Protection Plan for the towns situated on the banks of seven rivers in Madhya Pradesh to make them pollution free and for the purification of water;

(b) whether major cities/towns of Mandideep, Bhojpur, Bhopal and Vidisha are adversely affected by pollution in Betwa river;

(c) the steps taken for preventing these places from pollution; and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government in this regard and the time-frame fixed for the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) to (d) Polution abatement works have been sanctioned under the National River Conservation Plan in 11 towns locatd on the banks of 7 rivers in Madhya Pradesh. These towns are Indore, Ujjain, Burhanpur, Mandideep, Bhopal, Vidisha, Jabalpur, Seoni, Chapara, Keolari and Nagda. Bhojpur is not included under this Plan. Since Mandideep, Bhopal and Vidisha have been included under the National river Conservation Plan, these towns will not have any adverse impact after the pollution abatement works are completed. The approved cost of works for all the 11 towns in Rs. 101.19 crore. So far, out of 76 schemes of pollution abatement, 54 schemes have been sanctioned for an amount of Rs. 36.48 crore. An amount of Rs. 21.11 crore has been released to government of Madhya Pradesh so far for implementation of these schemes. Out of 54 schemes sanctioned, 24 schemes have been completed. The Plan is likely to be completed by 2006. Industrial pollution from these towns is monitored by the State Pollution Control Board and the Central Pollution Control Board under the existing environmental laws.

Adequacy of forest area

1425. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the forest area at present in the country and whether it is adequate from the environment point of view; and

(b) if not, what steps are being taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) Forest area of the country is 76.52 million hectares and forest cover of the country is 63.72 million hectares. As per National Forest Policy 1988, the national goal should be to have a minimum of one-third of the geographical area of the country under forest/tree cover.